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CHAPTER TWO

Evolution of Librarianship

As already stated in chapter one, a library is concerned with the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, study and consultation. The growth and importance of libraries brought about the profession of librarianship.

The art of writing preceded libraries. The need for human beings to transmit their thoughts and visions in an external medium to others and the preservation of culture brought about the idea of writing. The need to collect these writings for preservation so that they can be passed from one generation to the other could have been the harbinger of libraries. Writing started more than 7000 years ago. Writing is a representation of sound and speech in a meaningful form. Many types of writing have evolved, from cuneiform to hieroglyphics and now the alphabets. Several kinds of media for the transfer of information have evolved over the years. These include clay tablets, papyrus, stone, parchment, paper, microforms and now the digital medium.

History of Libraries

In describing the history of libraries it will be delineated into three eras. These are the ancient times, medieval times and modern era. Emphasis will, however, be laid on landmark developments.

Ancient Times

Libraries have existed for a long period, as far as back as 6000 years ago. The beginnings can be traced to the Sumerians (West Pakistan) who developed the clay tablets in which cuneiform signs and



characters were used to record the activities of the government, temple and business. Cuneiform writing was a form of wedge-shaped pen that was inscribed on clay. It was used for inscribing symbols on clays. This made impression on wet clay tablets, which were later dried and hardened. These tablets were later preserved and neatly arranged. This can be said to be the precursor of libraries. When the Babylonian Empire led by King Sargon I conquered Sumeria, the culture of cuneiform writing was integrated into the Babylonian civilisation. The Assyrians succeeded the Babylonians.

During the era of Assurbanipal, the King of Assyria (668-626 BC) was known to have collected over 30,000 tablets on all subjects throughout his empire. The collection consisted mainly of inscribed tablets and cylinders of baked clays. His scribes transcribed the tablets. The collections were found mainly in certain rooms in the palace at Nineveh. The tablets contained historical records, poetical works, myths and chronicles, religious texts, astronomical observations, etc. There was evidence that scholars and kings in the Empire used the libraries. Unfortunately, the Empire fell after the armies of Persia conquered it. They destroyed everything including the libraries.

Later on, libraries were found in Egypt and instead of tablets and clay as media of information, rolls made up of papyrus were used as medium of recorded information. In China, animal bones and tortoise shells were used as a medium of recorded knowledge. The bones were usually cleaned and polished before they were used as a writing medium. The Egyptians utilised the type of writing called hieroglyphics (that is, stone writing) to record all kinds of activities, be it in the temple, royal palaces and other places. Hieroglyphic/picture writing was made up of symbols and characters that have been agreed upon by the society as representing certain ideas. These ideas were communicated through drawing or painting. The papyrus was made from papyrus reed, in which the stems were cut into strips and then pressed into sheets which were joined together to form scrolls. Papyrus is perishable.

The recorded knowledge in papyrus, used in ancient Egypt, covered many subjects including agriculture, government, poetry and music. Papyrus dominated the educational system because

they were the first set of people to be literate. Amongst the priests were teachers, scribes, etc. Thus, the priests were generally the custodians of the papyrus they used in recording information. It is therefore not surprising that most of the libraries were in temples. The ancient Egyptians revered temples, because apart from being the spiritual centres, they were also the economic and administrative centres. They usually contained halls, schools, treasuries and rooms for officers. The temple performed a myriad of functions, including worshipping, serving as schools and colleges for the training of priests. All these made it possible for libraries to be located in the temples. In addition to the temple libraries, many succeeding kings in Egypt also had libraries attached to their palaces. Of particular importance was the library built by King Ptolemy I at Alexandria. This library was also the focus of the succeeding governors, Kings Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III. The library attracted scholars from all over the world. The library used to collect all books on ships that docked at Alexandria and secured from Athens, the capital of Greece, as well as official state copies of the plays by Greek tragedians. At a time it housed more than 700 000 rolls of papyrus. A branch of the library was also built at the temple of Serapis. The Library was very famous because of the quality of the organisation of its collection.

There was also evidence of ancient libraries in Greece. But the best known of these were Aristotle's Library and the Alexandrian Library.

Aristotle had his private library, which contained a large number of collections obtained through gifts and collections. As it was common during ancient times, the kings played prominent roles in the development of libraries in ancient Greece. The Greeks were famous scholars, among who were Plato, Archimedes, Aristachus, Hippocrates, Herodotus and Aristotle. Thus, there was recorded information in many disciplines, especially in philosophy, politics, ethics, poetry, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, science, etc. The works of these writers were written on papyrus. There is no doubt that many people were literate in Greece, hence there were many private collections. As in many other countries during the ancient times, many of the temples in Greece had libraries. It should be

noted, however, that during this era, Egypt was under the Greek Empire, and Alexandria was the Mediterranean Seaport of Egypt. It was also the capital of Egypt under the Greek Empire. Alexander the Great appointed governors in succession to govern Egypt. One of the governors, King Ptolemy I established the Alexandrian Library. The library was established as a research library for scholars. The Alexandrian Library occupied two buildings, one at the Temple of Muses and the other at the Temple of Serapis.

Another notable library established was at Pergamum in Asia Minor, which was part of the Greek Empire, called the Pergamum Library. It was established by King Attalus. It was a research and a scholarly library. King Eumenes in Pergamum found an alternative to papyrus because King Ptolemy II of Egypt banned the export of papyrus to Pergamum, thereby stifling intellectual growth. As a result, an alternative was found to papyrus in the form of parchment or vellum, which became a medium for writing in Pergamum. Parchment was made from the thin layers of animal skin. It could not be made into scrolls like papyrus so it had to be folded down the middle and then sewed together. This was a more durable writing medium than papyrus. It offered a smooth writing surface.

The Romans, as a result of spoils of war, also had a share of ancient libraries. Many of the spoils of war brought to Rome by the Roman legions included books and private collections. The Romans were great scholars, thus they were great book collectors and exhibitionists. There were many private libraries in Rome because it was sort of a status symbol, as the collections were hardly used. The Roman Empire was great; many countries were conquered including Greece. One significant feature of the Roman generals was that as part of their booty, they usually ensured that educated people were taken as slaves and with their collections taken to Rome. The educated people captured were used as scribes. Many of these collections formed the initial collection of Roman libraries. Most of the books in their libraries were written both in Greek and Latin. By the beginning of the fourth century, public libraries began to sprout, as there were about 28 public libraries in Rome. Many other cities in the Roman Empire also followed suit by building public libraries. As the Roman Empire became unwieldy, it was divided

into two for easy administration. The Western Empire was based in Rome, while the Eastern Empire had its headquarters in Byzantium (known today as Istanbul in Turkey). Unfortunately, the Barbarians captured the Western Empire. They practically halted all kinds of development, by destroying anything they found including libraries. They retarded the growth of knowledge, killed educated people and disrupted commerce. The Empire literally lapsed into illiteracy. On the other hand, the Eastern Empire continued to make progress, as it preserved both the Greek and the Latin Culture. It established many more libraries. The priests were largely unaffected, as they maintained their education. They ensured that libraries were established in the monasteries, cathedrals and schools.

Medieval times

Christianity played a dominant role during this era as its expansion depended upon wider knowledge of religious documents; hence libraries were usually in monasteries and cathedrals. The priests were the torchbearers of knowledge. The monks and bishops were responsible for the growth of libraries. The parchment codex was the principal medium of recorded knowledge as it replaced papyrus. The parchment codex resembles the book of today as it was a bound manuscript which had been folded into several parts and then sewn. The monks were responsible for collecting manuscripts, and then hand-copying them. Monks worked in a room called scriptorium where religious works were copied. The scriptoria contained facilities for copying manuscripts, as well as original and creative writing by individuals. Thus, many original books were produced in the monasteries. There were many monasteries established and they became centres for the collection and multiplication of Christian books. As a result of the expansion of many of the monasteries, a sort of "librarian" called a special officer responsible for the care and preservation of books was appointed in many of the monasteries. As time went on, the role of monasteries diminished, many of them disintegrated and many monastic libraries were neglected. This was as a result of scholarly activity in Europe. Many aristocrats were interested in book collection and, also, many universities were established.

It should also be noted that during the medieval era in Europe, Islamic libraries were also being developed in the Islamic world, especially among the Arabs and the Asians. As a matter of fact, the development of libraries in the Islamic world greatly accelerated the development of libraries in Europe. Paper was invented as a medium of writing in the Islamic world, having learnt the art of paper making in China. Apart from mosques serving as prayer houses, they also served as schools, community centres and libraries.

Modern Era

The desire to have knowledge, and the increasing spread of education, coupled with the invention of movable types by Johannes Gutenberg, accelerated the growth of libraries in Europe. Hand copying of manuscripts was discontinued as printing was done on paper with the movable types. The Chinese had earlier on invented paper and the use had been extended to Europe, and hence books were produced in large quantities which made them affordable. The manuscripts in the libraries were replaced by books and, for the first time, books were arranged on the shelves at the Vatican Library in Rome. Many large libraries were established in Europe, especially the Soborne Library at the University of Paris and the State Royal Libraries in France. The Royal House of France contributed to the growth of libraries in France. This was done through acquisition, gifts, seizure and amalgamation. Many people became literate in Europe, hence libraries were established throughout Europe. For example, in Great Britain, many municipal libraries were founded in the 1600s and the first Public Library Act was passed by the British parliament in 1850. Libraries sprouted all over Great Britain. Thomas Bodley donated his private collection to the Oxford University. The British Museum Library, established in London, and the Bibliotheque Nationale (National Library) in Paris were based mainly on donations from private collections. It was during this era that national libraries became the depositories of all publications in the various countries.

Also, libraries were developed at an exponential rate in the United States of America during this era. Many private collections were developed which later metamorphosed to university libraries. For example, John Harvard's personal collection was the initial collection of Harvard University Library.

One notable library that evolved from a private collection was the Library of Congress. After the Library was destroyed by the British soldiers who burnt down the Capitol building in 1800, the library bought the private collection of Thomas Jefferson, a former American president. The private collection of 6700 volumes covered a wide range of subjects. The collections were in many disciplines including law, farming, science, etc. Many of the colonialists in the USA also brought with them books from Europe which were made available to friends who needed them. Benjamin Franklin started what was called a Subscription Library in 1731 in Philadelphia. Public libraries were also established throughout the United States of America, after the Boston Public Library was established in the 1850s. The growth of libraries accelerated in the United States of America. During this period various types of libraries emerged. The American Library Association was established in 1876. The Association also established the *Library Journal* that assisted in the promotion of libraries. About the same time, Melville Dewey also devised the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme.

In 1927 an international association of libraries was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Association known then as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) was formed to represent the interest of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession. The association now known as the International Federation of Library and Institutions had 1622 members in 143 countries as at the year 2000.

Development of Librarianship in Africa

Africa is generally regarded as the Dark Continent because there was very little interaction between Africans and the West during the ancient times; hence it was thought that Africa was late in receiving Western civilisation. It is known, however, that collections of recorded knowledge had existed in Africa, as witnessed with the development of writing and libraries in Egypt as well as in Ethiopia. Just like in the Greek and Roman Empires, learned priests and monks played prominent roles in the spread of knowledge in

Ethiopia, as manuscripts were kept in churches and monasteries. Ethiopia adopted Greek as its religious and diplomatic language. Also, the Islamic spread to Africa brought the use of Arabic writing which created Arabic records. In spite of the fact that recorded knowledge existed in Africa, these were mainly in foreign languages like Greek, Arabic and Latin. There was absence of recorded knowledge in indigenous languages, but there were certainly records that referred specifically to Africa. The earliest written record, a handbook known as *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* was written in Greek language. It contained information on ships and sailors that were involved in the exchange of commodities between the East African coast and towns in the East African mainland. Also, Chinese records describing trade between Southern China and East Africa were also found. The first record written in a language indigenous to Africa was found in Ethiopia. The language was Geez. The record found was a Bible that was written in Geez language.

There is no doubt that the missionaries were in the forefront of the expansion of knowledge in Africa. The Christian missionaries developed the system of writing in African languages and encouraged literacy. Although oral traditions were prevalent in Africa at the time the missionaries came into the continent, because of the absence of written records, there was hardly any development of libraries. Even though knowledge was preserved through the elders of communities who were used as repositories of knowledge on the culture of the community, this knowledge was transmitted from one generation to the other verbally, or in the form of rituals, ceremonies, etc.

During the 19th century, many important libraries existed in Africa. For example, South Africa had a library in Cape Town (1818) known as the South African Public Library. Other libraries in South Africa, especially subscription libraries were established in Grahamstown (1842), Port Elizabeth (1848), Cradock (1850), etc. The Fourah Bay College Library was founded in Sierra Leone in 1827, the Library of the Faculty of Medicine, Cairo in 1828. The Library of the Bibliotheque du Centre de Recherches et de Documentation du Senegal, at St. Louis was started in 1837, the Library of the University of Liberia was established in 1862. The

National Library in Cairo was established in 1870 and the Library of the University of Algiers was built in 1879. Bulawayo Public Library was opened in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1896. It was a subscription library. By 1928, there were seven subscription libraries spread throughout the country. The first agricultural library in tropical Africa was established in Zomba, Nyasaland (now Malawi) in 1899.

However, the rapid development of libraries as we know it today in Africa can be traced to the colonial era when Europeans colonised most parts of Africa and implanted their culture and norms. One of the important legacies of the colonialists was the library. Ekpe (1979), however, maintained that the establishment of libraries by the colonialists in Africa was purely economic. For example, the production of export crops was emphasised during the colonial era for commercial purposes. Thus, a number of research institutes and departments were established with a view to advancing their production. The need to establish special libraries for these research institutes/departments, especially agricultural libraries, became the norm.

Holdsworth (1961) succinctly described the colonial power complete dominance of library development in Africa, when he wrote as follows:

The pattern of library development in Africa and elsewhere showed a progression from bread and butter libraries indispensable for the proper exercise of the functions of a state (colonial power) and for the work of industry, trade and professional classes through libraries of institutions of higher learning to finally public libraries, is in a way, a reflection of the colonial interest and priorities.

During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, the Italians established a central government library for Italian East Africa and also had a good library in Asmara. One significant development in the Eastern Region of Africa was the establishment of the East African Literature Bureau in 1947. It was set up mainly to meet and foster the increasing demands for books, encourage local authorship

and publish books in local language and in English language. It was also mandated to establish large libraries in the three capital towns of Kenya, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and Uganda. Although it failed to establish large libraries, nevertheless, it pioneered library development in the region.

The colonialists encouraged higher education in the colonies. For example, the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa, which was set up in 1943, recommended a university each for Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Thus, by 1948, University Colleges in Ibadan, Nigeria and Legon, Ghana were established and they were affiliated to the University of London. Their libraries were also established in that year.

In 1950, The Gold Coast (now Ghana) Library Board Ordinance was passed. It was the first library legislation for the development of libraries in tropical Africa. It was set up to equip and maintain libraries throughout Ghana. This was a departure from the norm then where public libraries were under local authorities. Thus, a central government with financial strength backed up with legislation was expected to develop public libraries in the country evenly. The Board was charged with the development of libraries in secondary schools, teacher training colleges, polytechnics, and middle schools throughout the country.

Role of International Organisations

International organisations such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, USA, the British Council and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) played significant roles in the development of libraries in Africa. For example, Lagos Library, the first public library in Nigeria was established with the support of Carnegie Corporation in 1932. Carnegie also provided a financial grant to Bulawayo Library in 1939, which eventually became the National Free Library Service. It was also responsible for the setting up of the first library school in West Africa in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1959.

The British Council was very prominent in the establishment of libraries in Anglophone Africa. Flood (1962) claimed that the British Council was entrusted to assist in developing public libraries

in Anglophone Africa. Thus, librarians from Africa visited Britain while their British counterparts toured African countries with a view to assisting library development (Flood 1964). Other contributions of the British Council were the provision of scholarships to enable librarians to train locally or in British library schools, as well as the provision of funds for the development of library services. It provided seed money for the establishment of libraries, as long as the respective governments agreed to maintain such libraries when established. In 1959, the British Council decided on the acceleration of indigenous library development in Anglophone Africa. Consequently, it was responsible for the acceleration of national public library systems in Sierra Leone, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Botswana and Swaziland.

Unesco was responsible for organising the famous Unesco "Seminar on the Development of Public Libraries in Africa" held in Nigeria in 1953. The seminar covered a wide range of topics on library development. Sixteen resolutions were made which were grouped under three categories. These were:

- Organising public library services on regional or national scale.
- Provision, selection and use of publications and audio-visual materials in African public libraries.
- Professional training for public library services.

The recommendations arising from the seminar provided the blueprint for the development of librarianship in Africa. It was a watershed. One of the recommendations arising from the seminar was the setting up of regional library schools at Ibadan in Nigeria, Dakar in Senegal and Kampala in Uganda. Another important resolution was the need to have library associations in the region. As a follow-up to the seminar, librarians from the West Africa region that participated in the seminar founded the West Africa Library Association (WALA). It was inaugurated in Lagos in 1954. The association comprised of librarians from Gambia, Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria and Sierra Leone. One of the achievements of the Association was its notable role in establishing the first library school in West Africa at the University of Ibadan in 1959. It applied to Carnegie Corporation to support the establishment of the school.

The Association also launched a journal entitled *WALA Bulletin*, which later changed to *WALA News*. It was the forum for reporting developments in the region. Unfortunately, WALA broke up in 1962 when the two major member-countries, Nigeria and Ghana, wanted their own national associations. There was also inadequate funding for the Association to operate smoothly. Fortunately, WALA was resuscitated in October 1999 in Ibadan, Nigeria. Unlike the old WALA, the Association has been broadened to include countries from Francophone Africa. The first annual conference of the resuscitated Association was held in Ghana in September 2001. The objectives of WALA, among others, are: to provide leadership for the development and improvement of libraries and information services in West Africa, raise the image of the profession and stimulate and strengthen national library associations in member countries.

Similarly, librarians in Eastern Africa formed a regional grouping called the East African Library Association (EALA) in 1956. It was made up of national library associations of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The main objectives were to: promote, establish and improve library services in East Africa, improve the standard of librarianship and status of the profession, and, lastly, to bring together all persons interested in libraries. The association met once every two years. The venue of the conference was rotated among the three countries. Like its counterpart in the West Africa sub-region, EALA, in 1972, broke up into three national library associations of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. However, a loose association was formed to replace EALA and it was broadened to include countries in Central and Southern Africa. Thus, EALA was replaced with the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians (SCECSAL) in 1972. The first SCECSAL conference was held in 1974 in Tanzania.

SCECSAL is a virile library organisation that has a membership of 25 national library associations. The organisation has played a laudable role in the development of libraries, especially in the formation of library associations, professional development and the exchange of knowledge amongst professionals in the region.

Many African librarians have actively participated in the

development of the profession world-wide. In 2001, Kay Raseoka, the Director, Library Services at the University of Botswana was elected the President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). She took up her position in 2003. Before then, Bart Nwafor, a former University Librarian, of the University of Jos, Nigeria had been prominent in IFLA. He was a former Chairman of IFLA Africa Section. Because of his many activities in IFLA, a staff development programme for African librarians was established to immortalise his name – Bart Nwafor Staff Development Programme.

Also, African librarians have a presence on the World Wide Web through the African Listserve, which is an open moderated discussion list for librarians and other professionals in Africa. It is based in South Africa. The listserve provides a discussion forum for librarians in Africa and encourages contacts and communication between them and among professionals on the continent.

Digital and virtual libraries are being introduced into Africa. For example, the African Digital Library Online started in 1999. Technikon South Africa (TSA) and the Association of African Universities (AAU) in collaboration with NetLibrary, a private company, set it up. The library provides access to users throughout the continent to a library of full-texts of more than 8000 textbooks for use on the Internet, at no cost to the user provided he/she lives in Africa. It can be accessed via <http://www.AfricanEducation.org/>. The African Virtual University Library contains about 2400 journals. This can be accessed on <http://www.avu.org/online/section/library/index2.htm>

Many countries in Africa today have strong national library associations. The Nigerian Library Association boasts of over 4000 members. The Association played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Librarians Registration Council in Nigeria. The Council, which was established in 1997, is empowered to maintain a register of librarians. Only the registered members are allowed to practise as librarians in the country. The Council is also charged with determining the standard of knowledge and skills to be possessed by persons seeking to become registered librarians. The Library and Information Association of South Africa is a formidable

library association in Africa. It has over 6000 members. It is involved in many activities, especially in the professional development of librarians in South Africa. It has a staff complement of three full-time members including an Executive Secretary that run the secretariat of the Association. It has attracted many grants for the development of libraries and professional development in South Africa.

Today, there are hundreds of different types of libraries in various parts of Africa with the objective of providing information to users of various categories. It is sad to note, however, that the development of libraries in Africa is still elitist, as libraries in Africa primarily serve the literate. The rural community, which constitutes the neglected majority, still remains largely unserved; library development in Africa is still largely urban-based.

Types of Libraries

Libraries are broadly categorised into different types based on the target audience. Each category could be further divided into specific types. The major types of libraries are as follows:

- Academic Libraries
- School Libraries
- National Libraries
- Special Libraries
- Public Libraries

Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are libraries that are attached to post-secondary institutions. Academic libraries are therefore as varied and distinctive as the institutions which they serve. Academic institutions can be categorised mainly into two, namely: university and non-university institutions such as polytechnics, technikons, colleges of education, schools of nursing, etc. They perform functions directly related to the mission of each institution. Based on this distinction, academic libraries can be broadly divided into two. These are university libraries and libraries that are attached to non-

university institutions. The latter libraries are called college libraries.

University Libraries

The main purpose of a university library is to support the objectives of a university, which are in the areas of learning, teaching, research and service. The users of a university library are students, researchers, lecturers, support staff (non-teaching staff) and members of the local community in which the university is located. The library is regarded as the heart of the intellectual system of the university. To a large extent, the quality of a university is measured by the services provided by the library because of its unique position in the over-all university system.

To the undergraduate students, the library is the learning centre. It provides materials that are needed for learning for all the courses offered in the university, as well as potential courses that may be offered. Postgraduate students use the library essentially for research. The library provides all resources needed for carrying out effective learning and research activities. To the teaching staff of the university, the library provides resources to support teaching and research. It provides resources and services to support each of the research projects and materials of sufficient quantity and diversity to support research of whatever kind in every subject offered in the university. The support staff of the university uses the library for learning and other purposes. The community, in which the library is located, occasionally makes use of the university library for the purpose of consulting local materials collected by the university. A university library is also expected to provide information sources for the purpose of extra-mural studies, recreation, entertainment and general knowledge.

Apart from serving its primary purposes of providing resources and services for learning, teaching, research and service, it also serves as a depository of the university publications or in some cases, national publications. The library of a university can serve the purpose of a national library, as was the case with the University of Ibadan Library, Nigeria, which performed the functions of a national library until 1970 when the National Library of Nigeria

Decree was enacted, replacing the National Library of Nigeria Act of 1964.

In view of the variety of services a university is supposed to provide, coupled with the fact that all subject fields taught in the university and potential subject fields must be catered for, university libraries are sometimes decentralised along faculty and departmental lines, with the main library coordinating the departmental and faculty libraries.

For a university library to perform its myriad of functions, its collection must not only include books and journals but also other materials such as generalised and specialised collections, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, museum objects, photographs, theses and dissertations, audiovisual materials, microforms, Compact Disk-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), and necessary equipment such as microfiche and microfilm readers, computer and CD-ROM drives, which are needed in order to use some of the items in the collection. The library must also have full access to the Internet. University library collections are always large, running into millions of materials. Some university libraries in Africa have more than one million volumes.

Owing to the magnitude of university resources, it employs professional librarians who are highly qualified. Many librarians in university libraries have a minimum qualification of masters degrees. Many of them have doctoral degrees in librarianship or in other subjects. As much as possible, librarians in university libraries are expected to have bachelor's degrees, or in some cases, advanced degrees in other subjects plus qualifications in librarianship.

For managerial purposes, a university library can be organised based on a functional approach, a subject approach or a hybrid of subject and functional approach. In a functional approach, the library is organised based on the functions performed in the library; hence we have readers services division, reference division, cataloguing division, acquisition division, etc. Librarians are therefore organised under such divisions. For libraries organised by subject approach, the library is organised along the broad disciplines offered in the university. All the librarians perform the essential functions of the library, such as acquisition, cataloguing,

reference services, etc, but only in their subject areas. In this approach, all documents related to the same discipline are kept in one location. The library staff are specialists in their various subject areas since they must have obtained at least a bachelor degree in their subjects. The hybrid approach is a mixture of subject and functional approaches, where librarians are divided along the functional line as well as major disciplines category.

University libraries are the best-developed type of libraries in Africa. They are better funded compared with other types of libraries. They provide the type of library and information services that could be found elsewhere in the world. Therefore, the libraries are relatively well developed. In Nigeria, for example, it is mandatory that at least 5% of the total budgets of universities be allocated to the libraries. In Ghana, the figure is 10%.

College Libraries

This encompasses all libraries that are attached to tertiary institutions other than universities. Polytechnic libraries, technikon libraries, college of education libraries, school of nursing libraries and libraries of post-secondary academic institutions fall under this category. The objectives of college libraries are somehow similar to those of university libraries except that the emphasis is less on research. The main function is to serve to the fullest extent possible the programmes of the college and implement its educational objectives. Also, unlike a university library, which has a collection of broad spectrum of subject fields, a college library has a collection of limited number of subject fields. Thus, the collection of a college library is much smaller in scope and size than a typical university. For example, the collection of a college of education library will be geared towards the production of the teaching manpower. Therefore, the collection of such a library would be largely materials connected with education and teaching subjects.

The librarians in college libraries are as qualified as those in the university libraries, but they are generally fewer than university libraries. They provide essentially the same services. Generally, most college libraries are organised on the functional approach.

The organisation and services of college libraries vary from

one college to the other. While some college libraries are well staffed, others are abysmally staffed. It is not uncommon to find only one professional librarian working in a college library. In some college libraries, the collections are of a high standard, while in other college libraries, most of the stock is outdated.

School Libraries

These are libraries attached to schools: pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. They supplement the teaching of school children. A school library caters for children who are eager to read and also for backward children who read with difficulty and who require visual aids and all kinds of incentives to study. These libraries contain more of audio-visual and graphic materials such as pictures, photographs, realia, diagrams, etc, than other types of libraries. Other materials that may be contained in a school library include books, magazines, periodicals, and newspapers. The main purposes of a school library as enunciated by Ralph (1962) are to :

- encourage the reading habits of the learner.
- develop in pupils the ability to learn from books without teachers.
- break down the rigid divisions which the school timetable often creates between different subjects.
- give social training.

Today, many school libraries have transformed into school library resource centres. Items collected in the library have been broadened to include toys and computers, study kits, films and film strips, video and audiotapes, video machines, cassette radios, etc. These items are acquired to ease learning on the part of students. Because of the variety of its collection, a school library is sometimes called a media resource centre. According to Hall (1986), the school as a resource centre is expected to provide:

- information services that respond to the information needs of teachers and foster their professional development.
- learning laboratory that provides opportunities for pupils to

develop information skills and develop a commitment to informal decision-making.

- learning laboratory that links learning and resources for learning.
- opportunities for pupils to become self-directed learners and develop a commitment to a lifelong learning.

For a library to fulfil the functions listed above, it must be professionally managed. In most cases, the teachers, who must have undergone some training in librarianship, work as the school librarians. Such teachers are called teacher-librarians. In some schools, professional librarians are recruited to manage the school libraries. However, in most African countries, teachers in the school, especially those responsible for teaching English Language and Literature, are often put in charge of school libraries. They generally do not have any training in librarianship. This is because there is a general lack of teachers with librarianship background in primary and secondary schools in Africa. Some library schools in Africa are now offering qualifications in school librarianship. At the University of Botswana, there is a Certificate in School Librarianship programme which is offered in sandwich mode over a period of two years for teachers of secondary schools in Botswana. Holders of such a certificate are often expected to manage the school libraries in which they teach.

Unfortunately, school libraries are poorly developed in Africa. Most of the schools do not have what can be termed a school library. In most cases, they have library collections which are hardly useful to pupils and teachers. Because of the poor state of school libraries in Africa, Tawete (1995) advocated for combined school/public or public library branch would be located within a school compound, and it would serve school children, teachers and community members. This, hopefully, would ensure that school libraries are funded and managed since members of the community would contribute to the maintenance of such a joint library.

National Libraries

The National library is supposed to be the apex library of a country. In many cases, the library is in the executive arm of government, as it is the case in Nigeria, Botswana and many other countries. In some countries, it services the legislature like the Library of Congress in the United States of America. Sometimes some national libraries also perform the functions of a public library. Many of the national libraries in Southern Africa perform this function. The national library is responsible for developing public libraries in each country.

The principal function of a national library is to serve as the depository of all copyright publications within a country. This facilitates the publication by the library of the national bibliography of the country on an annual basis. It is also expected that national libraries should collect all foreign literature pertinent to the country. Publishers, authors, all government agencies and other corporate bodies in a country are by law mandated to deposit copies of all their publications with the national library. The legal depository laws usually specify the number of copies to be deposited with the national library. For example, in Nigeria, twenty-five copies of all federal government publications, ten copies of state publications and three copies of all commercial publications must be deposited with the National Library of Nigeria. As a precaution, to ensure that the national heritage is not lost in case of fire and other disasters, a back-up copy of all publications deposited at the National Library of Nigeria is always deposited with the University of Ibadan Library. The National Library of Nigeria publishes annually *National Bibliography of Nigeria*. Similarly in Botswana, three agencies have been designated as depositories. Thus, apart from the Botswana National Library Service, the University of Botswana and Botswana National Archives and Records Service are also depositories. The Botswana National Library Service publishes *National Bibliography of Botswana*. Almost all countries in Africa have backlogs in the publication of their national bibliographies. Some are several years behind schedule. This is the major problem faced by national libraries in Africa. Some of the reasons adduced for non-publication of national bibliographies

include authors not depositing their publications, lack of enforcement of deposit laws, inadequate staffing and inadequate funding.

Other functions of a national library include serving as the national bibliographic centre, national centre for translation, national lending and document delivery centre, national referral centre, co-ordinating centre for library co-operation and resource sharing, etc. Apart from publishing current national bibliographies of a country, it is also responsible for producing union catalogues and directories of libraries in a country. The national library is also the body responsible for assigning the International Standard book Number (ISBN) and the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) to publishers and authors in a country. It also provides cataloguing-in-publication (CIP) data to authors and publishers. The national library is also supposed to represent the country on all library matters at international conferences. The library is expected to provide leadership role, advise government on library development and policy and support major research and development programmes in librarianship in the country.

Special Libraries

Special libraries are libraries established to meet the highly specialised requirements of professional or business groups. A library is special depending on whether it covers a specialised collection, a special subject, or a particular group of users or even the type of parent organisation. A library that collects only films, museum objects or maps can be categorised as a special library because of its specialised collection. Hence we have map library, museum library, film library, etc. This type of library is not delineated by subject or users but mainly by form of the items collected. A library that covers a particular subject can also be termed a special library because it collects items on that subject only. It can acquire any form of information material, as long as the items are in that subject area. Thus, we have science library, music library, etc.

A library can be special if it only serves a particular group of users such as lawyers, doctors, nurses, etc. Such libraries are called

professional libraries. Another group of particular users could be patients in the hospital or prisoners in prisons, hence we have hospital libraries or prison libraries respectively. When the library serves a group of people united in business, it is a business library. For example, banks, insurance companies, manufacturers' associations could have business libraries. When an institution has a mandate, a library supporting such a mandate is a special library. For example, a research institution established to develop the production and development of cocoa or grains or root crops, or any commodity, is a special library. An institution responsible for analysing the economic policy of a country will have a special library with a mission to research into the mandate area. This type of library could be called a research library. Many government agencies also have libraries attached to them. Such libraries are called government libraries. This is very common with the executive, legislative and the judiciary arms of government. Special libraries often cover a specific and definable subject field. The printed collection of a special library is mainly in the areas of periodicals, books, reports (consultancy report, technical report, and feasibility studies), executive summaries, and abstracts. The needs of the users are highly specific; the librarian must always anticipate their information needs. It is, therefore, not surprising that librarians of special libraries are highly qualified, possessing qualifications in the subject area covered by the library, as well as in librarianship/ information science. It should be emphasised that the nature of special library service is personalised.

Government departments/agencies, private companies and professional associations/organisations generally sponsor special libraries. White (1984) and Edoka (2000) summarised some of the important characteristics of special libraries as follows:

- provision of information for practical purposes, and the information provided must be quick and precise.
- the librarians are involved in researching and finding answers for the client rather than client seeking for information with the assistance of the library.
- their users are typically homogeneous.

- they generally have small number of users, hence they usually have their research profiles. These users have information being selectively disseminated to them.
- the collections are highly specialised and generally with restricted access only to the users.
- the collections are directly and narrowly related to the mission of the organisation.
- evidence of the usefulness of the library to the organisation must always be demonstrated; thus it is expected that a special library must make a significant contribution to the parent organisation in order to justify its existence.

Public Libraries

Whilst other types of libraries are meant for a specific group of users, the public library is not restricted to any group of users. It is more or less a universal library. It is expected to serve all kinds of people including young children and people with disabilities or even people who for one reason or the other are incapacitated. Such people include patients in the hospitals, prisoners, etc. They are generally managed, financed and supported by governments, local communities and occasionally by non-governmental organisations, etc. Some national libraries in Africa, develop, operate and maintain public libraries.

One of the earliest types of libraries in Africa is the public library. The colonialists encouraged the development of public libraries throughout Africa. The British Council also pioneered the development of public libraries in Africa.

Users of a public library vary from the highly educated and intelligent people to the stark illiterate, from the poorest to the wealthiest, from the inhabitants of most rural areas to those living in the urban areas, from the least disadvantaged to the most advantaged in the community. The service is provided without any form of discrimination based on gender or race. They serve as the intellectual, cultural and recreational centre of a community.

The public library is the centre of activity in a community. The characteristics of a public library can be summed up as follows:

- provision of free service to all.
- support for the civic and cultural activities of a community.
- meeting the informational needs of all the individuals in the community.
- provision of information sources for continuing education, vocational education and adult education, thereby facilitating informal education of all those interested in informal education.
- provision of education sources that will enrich and further formal education.
- encouragement of users to be involved in recreational activities.
- provision of library and information services to all, whether in urban or rural areas.
- provision of rental facilities to members of the public, such as a hall for events like wedding receptions, lectures and symposia, and also rooms for meetings, etc.

The public library is operated in many forms. It could be located in a single building or in a complex. It could provide library and information services through mobile libraries in which the library is located in a vehicle that goes from one community to the other. Mobile library service is very common in Africa. This is especially useful when some people are unable to make use of the library services because they are disadvantaged. These are people in hospitals, prisons, rural areas, riverine areas, etc. Public libraries are expected, through their extension services, to take some books and reading materials to them during a specified time of the week. Public libraries can also operate in the form of postal library services where services are provided through post. Public libraries generally take active part in literacy programmes, extension services and other programmes.

In order to serve the wide spectrum of its users effectively, the collections of a public library are as varied as all the items that can be collected by any type of library. It is common to find books,

journals, periodicals, newspapers and magazines, museum projects, artefacts, manuscripts, etc, in a public library. The public library is expected to employ highly qualified staff to manage and supervise its services.

In spite of the fact that public libraries have existed over a long period in Africa, they are perhaps one of the least developed legacies of the colonialists. The libraries are generally in a state of neglect. They are poorly stocked and most of the existing materials are outdated. The quality of staff is low. The slow development of public libraries in Africa can be attributed to inadequate funding. Unlike during the colonial era, and immediately after independence, when libraries were well funded either by governments or donor agencies, the situation has deteriorated considerably in the last twenty years, especially since the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme by The World Bank in most countries of Africa. Public libraries were the first casualty when most countries of Africa faced economic crises, devalued their currencies, and library budgets were cut. Public libraries were vulnerable because most of the resources are not produced locally, hence they could not procure books, journals and other necessary resources that required foreign exchange. Only a few public libraries in the continent have Internet access. Unlike other types of libraries, public libraries could not obtain financial support from any other source. The specific user groups of other types of libraries work to ensure that their libraries are not neglected by sourcing funds from other sources. Public libraries do not have clients with sufficient clout who could ensure that public libraries are sustained. Today, most public libraries in Africa are in a pathetic state.

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Review Questions

1. Discuss the various factors that contributed to the institutionalisation of libraries from the ancient times to the present.
2. Discuss the contributions of international organisations towards the development of librarianship in Africa.
3. Describe the various ways by which a library can be termed as special.